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with one or two exceptions, according to the expert opinion of Pere Vincent, with which I fully agree, to the period between the sixth and the third centuries. On top at various points we have found traces of Byzantine influence—hardly occupation—but the trenches revealed absolutely no sign of Hellenistic influence. We can thus state confidently that there was no village of a permanent nature on the *tell* except during the period of the restoration, though the top has been utilized for various purposes from the pre-exilic age down to the mediæval Arab period, as we shall presently see.

The excavation of the *rujm* is by no means completed, and we may have some surprises. At present we have found at least three superimposed fortresses, or *migdols*, dating respectively from the latest Canaanite or the earliest Israelite, about 1300–1100 B. C., the early kingdom, about 1000–800 B. C., and the Arab period. In my next report I will be able to furnish more exact information and photographs. We have interesting potsherds, walls and a Kufic coin by which to date the remains. The glacis of the first (?) *migdol* was six metres in height, and resembles very closely the glacis of the late Canaanite wall at Jericho. The walls from the interior of the second (?) *migdol* exhibit identically the same characteristic stonework as the so-called Solomonic palace at Megiddo. As you see, we have an unusually important and interesting task with which to usher in the series of archæological operations upon which we hope to enter. It is too early to attempt to correlate the archæological material with the literary indications, but I am convinced that we really have Gibeah.

April 2, 1922.

As a result of a little more work and extended study I would like to make a number of corrections in my report of a week ago. To my great surprise the northern terrace, below the surface of the *tell*, proved to conceal the pre-exilic, and afterwards the Roman Gibeah; the post-exilic village was built on the very summit as previously announced. The highest *migdol* is emphatically not Arab, but post-exilic, as shown by the potsherds found in it. The *migdol* beneath I would tentatively assign to the reign of Asa, and the *migdol* below that, to which the glacis may have belonged—this question can only be solved by further researches—presumably to the eleventh century. We do not know yet whether the third *migdol* is the oldest on the site or not. The glacis is very different from the glacis of the late Canaanite wall at Jericho. The glacis seems to be dated by the pebble-burnished red bowl fragments found at its base, as elsewhere at the lower levels; pebble-burnished pottery came in with the Philistines about 1150 B. C., a fact which points to an early Israelitic occupation of the site, but hardly favors a Canaanite occupation.

Together with our final report on the excavation, I hope to give an elaborate topographical study of the district north of Jerusalem, with a revision of the published material, and some new identifications. Tell en-Nasbeh I would identify with Beeroth, for reasons to be given hereafter.

## GIBEAH OF SAUL AND BENJAMIN

BY DIRECTOR ALBRIGHT

Remarkable as it may seem, not one of the important early Hebrew sites of Palestine has yet been dug. Up to the present, work has been car-

ried on almost exclusively in the large Canaanite mounds which fringe the fertile plain, hemming in the uplands. Though not a single mound has been completely excavated, interesting inscriptions and antiquities of all kinds have come to light, greatly increasing our knowledge of ancient Palestine. These discoveries are invaluable for the history of civilization, since Palestine commanded the most important ancient commercial routes, but they have so far contributed less to a better understanding of the Bible than we owe to the finds in Egypt and Mesopotamia.

What is the reason for this strange neglect of the old Israelite religious and social centres? Why have archaeologists neglected Bethel and Shiloh, Bethlehem and Hebron, Mizpeh and Gibeah, to say nothing of many other sites which played a preëminent rôle in the history of Israel and Judah before the disruption? In reply we may say that some of these ancient towns are buried beneath the debris of modern ones, that some of them were unwalled, and their remains have therefore been swept from the hill-top by the driving rains of winter or removed to be used in the building of later villages. Yet there are a number left, crowning the summits of barren hills, to which the attention of the excavator is directed by the name *tell*, i. e. "mound," applied to them by the native, and even more by the unmistakable "tell" conformation of the site. These unassuming mounds among the hills of Ephraim and Benjamin are of the greatest interest to us, since they represent authentic monuments of the Israelite past. Every stone and potsherd they conceal is hallowed to us by association with the great names of the Bible. Who can think of the tells which mark ancient Mizpah and Gibeah without a thrill, as memory calls up the shade of Samuel, and the heroic figure of Saul? If Mizpeh has preserved the trace of Samuel, and Gibeah carved memorials of Saul, as may well be the case, it is our duty to bring them to light without further ado. Even without such explicit testimonials of the past, we may safely expect to gain a much clearer idea of Hebrew civilization than was possible from the remains of Canaanite cities so far investigated.

Three miles north of Jerusalem, to the east of the road leading into Mount Ephraim, is the mound of Gibeah which now bears the name Tell el-Fûl, "Mound of the Bean." Such has been the general opinion among topographers ever since 1858, when Valentiner made this identification. The literary evidence is very strong. Josephus says that Gibeah lay an hour's march (thirty stadia) north of Jerusalem; in another place he estimates the distance at twenty stadia, or about forty minutes. The mean of these estimates is exactly in accord with the distance of three miles between Jerusalem and Tell el-Fûl. The account of the Benjamite war in Judges 19-20 furnishes conclusive testimony to the identity of the Gibeah of Josephus with the Gibeah of the Old Testament. A Levite left Bethlehem to bring his mistress with him to his home in Mount Ephraim. When they reached Jerusalem, it was nearly sunset, and his servant wished him to stop in the city. The Levite, however, objected to spending the night in a heathen town, and bade him go on, saying that they would stop either at Gibeah or at Ramah. Now both these towns were on the road; Ramah is er-Râm, two miles north of Tell el-Fûl and five miles north of Jerusalem. Since the Levite later stopped at Gibeah, it is obvious that the latter must have lain south of er-Râm, or approximately in the neighborhood of Tell el-Fûl. There are other strong arguments from the literary sources, but we may refer for them to Möller's article in the *Journal of the German Palestine Society*, 1915, pp. 49-53.

Curiously enough, nearly all those who have examined the site, including Möller himself and the surveyors for the Palestine Exploration Fund, have agreed that the site bears no remains of a former town. This extraordinary defect in observation is largely responsible for the fact that no attempt to dig there has ever been made. The older scholars had no conception of the true nature of a tell, and failed to realize that many an elevation which bears no ruins whatever on its surface conceals half a dozen superimposed strata of debris in its bosom. Möller's failure to observe is due solely to lack of the necessary archaeological training. As a matter of fact, the hill is strewn with potsherds, mostly Jewish or Graeco-Roman in type, and the wadi which receives the drainage of the eastern slope is full of them. The stones which must have projected above the debris of the ancient town for many centuries after its destruction have been removed for use in the mediaeval fortress which occupied the centre of the hill, or in the Arab castle which crowns the summit of the hill just south of Tell el-Fûl (Khirbet es-Şôma'). The cisterns which provided a supply of water for towns which were not blessed with perennial springs are found on the eastern slope of the hill; some are doubtless choked with rubbish and buried under the tell itself. Every tell so far excavated has contained cisterns. This disposes of the argument often brought forward that the place could not have had an adequate water-supply.

Most interesting of all present indications of antiquity are the tombs, a large number of which are found along the eastern slopes of Tell el-Fûl and the Râs el-I'mar, the next hill eastward, which is connected with Tell el-Fûl by a natural bridge, also lined with tombs. Many of these tombs have been opened by the peasants, and their contents sold. Jugs and bowls of various shapes and sizes, now in the museums of Jerusalem and Germany, show that the most flourishing period of the town's history lay in the period which witnessed the transition from Canaanite to Jewish civilization, that is, between 1200 and 900 B. C. It is not accidental that this is precisely the period during which, according to the Bible narrative, the greatest prosperity of the city fell. During the twelfth and eleventh centuries Gibeah was the chief city of Benjamin, and an Israelite outpost against the Jebusites; in the last quarter of the eleventh century it was the capital of Saul, founder of the organized kingdom of Israel. The transfer of the capital to Jerusalem by David, and the rapid development of this city, only an hour's walk away, proved fatal to Gibeah's prosperity, and we hear less and less of the city during the following centuries. When St. Jerome wrote, in the fifth century A. D., the town had long been completely destroyed.

In excavating Gibeah, the archaeologist has a number of great advantages. There are no human habitations on the hill, and accordingly no obstacles to its complete excavation. The mound is very shallow; I would estimate the average depth of debris at a metre or two. We may regard it therefore as practically certain that this debris represents a period of Israelite occupation alone, without a foregoing Canaanite age. The walled part of the city seems to have had a circumference of about 330 metres, or less than a quarter of a mile, but the northern and southern slopes of the hill were apparently also occupied.

Owing to the comparatively small quantity of debris which must be removed, and to the absence of later occupation, the site of Gibeah offers an excellent opportunity for the excavation of a famous Israelite city without expending the tens of thousands of dollars which are necessary in

larger mounds. For ten thousand dollars a large part of the site could be acquired and systematically dug; much smaller gifts will make it possible to excavate interesting sections of the city of Saul and Jonathan.

## THE EXCAVATIONS AT ASCALON

BY DIRECTOR ALBRIGHT

Ascalon is a name to conjure with. Few cities in the Old World have had a more romantic history than this, from the time when its fleets according to Greek tradition, held the thalassocracy of the eastern Mediterranean to its romantic destruction by its own suzerain, Saladin, who thus avoided its impending capture by the Lion Heart. "*Wallah*," he is reported to have said, "I would rather see my children perish than lose Ascalon!"

Ashkelon (to use the Hebrew form) first comes on the stage of written history with the wars of conquest which the Pharaohs of the eighteenth and nineteenth Egyptian dynasties waged in Palestine. We learn, however, from the recent excavations that it was already occupied by paleolithic man, more than ten thousand years ago, though so far no clear traces of the following neolithic have appeared. During the long generations of the fourth and third millenniums it must have been captured again and again by raiding Pharaohs, from the time when Lower Egypt was the center of a flourishing and civilized state, with its foci at Tanis and Sais, down through the empires of the first, fourth and sixth dynasties to the final collapse of the Hyksos Empire, under onslaughts from Mesopotamia and Upper Egypt. It submitted with a bad grace to an Egyptian governor and the humiliation of paying taxes, and rebelled for the last recorded time in the reign of Rameses the Great, whose son Merneptah recaptured the city in the same campaign in which the name of Israel appears for the first time in profane history. A generation later the fleets of the Philistines and their allies commenced serious raids on the Syrian coast. Ashkelon, in common with the other towns of the sea-shore, suffered severely from their incursions, and finally was occupied by the Philistines about 1170 B. C., after the strong arm of Rameses III was no longer stretched out over the land, to cow the "miserable Asiatics" into submission, and to protect them as well from foreign irruption.

The fact that Ascalon was the only real sea-port of Philistia and the geographical center of its pentapolis is enough in itself to call up thrilling visions of the past. We see the swift low barks of the Sea-peoples, which the Hebrews called "ships of Tarshish," or Etruscan barks, approaching the coast with rhythmic flash of the oar. At a smoke-signal the Canaanites, both townsmen and villagers, flock to arms, terror-stricken by the sudden appearance of the feather-crowned sea-kings, just as the English, two thousand years later, sounded the tocsin at sight of the dreaded Norsemen. Not without reason did the priest chant on holy days, "From fire and sword, good Lord, deliver us," nor was it without cause that the Canaanites anxiously awaited an oracle of good omen from the goddess of their city, the Lady of Ashkelon. Hitherto the joint action of the Syrian princes, assisted by the Sardinian mercenaries of Egypt, had warded off the flood from the north—this time, however, all resistance was in vain; before the rushing javelins the irregular Canaanite line broke and fled. In